of Jaan Undusk's essay on the connection between ethics and time. Undusk's discussion of the "right moment," the *kairos*, of (communicative) action, which is actually the first contribution to the volume, might be an inspired allusion to the manner in which Talvet conceives of the encounters between literatures and cultures. Dorothea Scholl's *Montaigne et l'amour de la sagesse* could also be seen as containing a filigree portrait of the Tartu sage.

But the most impressive intimation of his personality and creed is circumstantially offered in a quotation from a 1853 work of German-Estonian scholar Johann Heinrich Neukirch (1803–1870), made available in Liina Lukas' excellent overview of the history of "Weltliteratur in Tartu": "Der Wert der Summe der Kenntnisse, die man sich aus den Dichtern anzueignen vermag, lässt sich nicht hoch genug anschlagen, indem jene ein durch kein Andres zu ersetzendes Mittel sind, zu einer allseitigen Bildung und dadurch zu einer immer grösseren geistigen Freiheit zu gelangen."

In my humble opinion, there can be no more persuasive a way of capturing the reason behind Jüri Talvet's lifelong dedication to the global and universal cause of literature, and particularly of poetry, than the above-stated prospect of "eine immer grössere geistige Freiheit," an ever-greater spiritual freedom.

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***Combined and Uneven Development: Towards a New Theory of World-Literature*. Postcolonialism Across the Disciplines 17. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015. Pp. 196. ISBN: 9781781381915.**

On the cover of this interesting book, no single author or editor is indicated, the name of Warwick Research Collective (WReC) fulfilling that function instead. The book starts with "A Note on Collaborative Method" explaining that every chapter, and indeed every sentence, is the result of collaborative writing. It is not a collection of essays, in which chapters would usually be contributed by individual scholars, but a monograph written collectively

by seven people (who all own the copyright): Sharae Deckard, Nicholas Lawrence, Neil Lazarus, Graeme Macdonald, Upamanyu Pablo Mukharjee, Benita Parry, and Stephen Shapiro. Only once is the special expertise of a member of the group referred to (footnote 9, 160).

While the book contains two theoretical chapters and four chapters that analyse literary works, the two theoretical ones are considerably longer, constituting almost half of the main text. The basic insight of these chapters, on which this theory of world literature is built, is of political, economic and social character, and goes back to Trotsky, although it was already suggested by Marx's late writing. This argument could be summarized as follows: the development of global modernity is uneven *because* it is combined. The simultaneity of the nonsimultaneous (Ernst Bolch's *Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzetigen*) is not an anomaly that should or will disappear as modern development goes on. The underdevelopment of certain nations, regions, and neighbourhoods is not a lateral consequence or a malfunction of the system but an essential part of it. In other words, underdevelopment is the result of development. Preserved feudal structures in the countryside are connected with the modernisation of metropolitan areas. Likewise, capitalism does not only produce high technology, but also backwardness. Being combined does not mean that development is exactly the same everywhere on the globe. On the contrary, this results in unevenness. If combined development creates centres and peripheries, this does not mean that either of them will be homogeneous; rather they are also uneven. While one can find residential areas on the globally highest level in India, terrible living conditions still exist in some parts of the UK.

How can these insights about global capitalism be adapted to literary studies, and how can a new concept of world literature be based on them? For the WReC, world literature is what bears testimony to the shock of modernity. Therefore, world literature could not develop before the nineteenth century or the end of the eighteenth at the earliest. This definition ostentatiously recycles a good old Marxist theory of representation, namely that literature mirrors social reality. This may be the main reason why the WReC necessarily focus on narrative literature, almost exclusively on novels. Even if they explicitly state that the novel is an element of modernity as paradigmatic as cars, this hardly justifies a concept of world literature that excludes such huge domains of literature as poetry, among others. Theoretically, they emphasise that literature is a globally connected system, in which one can differentiate between core

cultures and peripheries. Unlike Moretti (whose concept is criticised on 55–57), they believe that the peripheries are more likely to develop poetic innovation. However, due to ubiquitous unevenness, peripheries can be localised in core countries too. In their analyses, they do not investigate the interconnectedness of peripheral poetics. Rather, they examine how social reality is represented in novels produced in the peripheries, because "[i]n (semi-)peripheral aesthetics, the 'shock' of combined unevenness is registered with particular intensity and resonance" (72). The literary works analysed in chapters three through six could not easily be described as representing social reality, as indicated by the works considered in each chapter: Chapter 3, Tayeb Salih, *Season of Migration to the North* (Sudan, 1969); Chapter 4, Victor Pelevin, *The Sacred Book of the Werewolf* (Russia, 2005); Chapter 5, Peter Pišťanek, *Rivers of Babylon* (Slovakia, 1991), Pio Baroja, *The Quest* (Spain, 1922), Halidor Laxness, *The Atom Station* (Iceland 1948), James Kelman, *The Busconductor Hines* (Scotland 1984); Ch. 6: Ivan Vladislavić, *Portrait with Keys* (South Africa, 2006). Indeed, these books are not realist novels. The WReC base their interpretations of such a post-modernist, magic-realist corpus as mirroring social reality on several theoretical insights. They make good use of a term coined by Michael Löwy in 2007, namely "critical irrealism." Löwy resorts to this phrase to describe a kind of literature that criticises the real, existing society while basing its aesthetics on imagination, the miraculous, the mysterious, or the dream. It is important to realize that even the overwhelming abundance of unreal elements in the represented world does not exclude the articulation of a critical position towards social reality. However, not even critical irrealism is able to construct a world exclusively from unreal elements. Frequently, real—and seriously criticised—social practices can be clearly discerned in this kind of literature. Even if the representation is irrealist, i.e. an adequate expression of a discontinuous experience and worldview, the object of the writing remains the existing social order. It is important to realize that the flourishing of irrealist poetics in the peripheries has historical reasons. What made nineteenth-century critical realism possible was the data-collecting activity of the modern state. However, in a colonial context, institutions of knowledge production served the goals of the colonisers, and therefore their kind of knowledge was suspicious in the eyes of the colonised. The latter needed other types of knowledge, such as legends, myths, which should be regarded as simultaneously constructed, alternative types of modern knowledge, rather than something archaic or

authentic. Logically then, peripheral literature makes use of the alternative, local forms of knowledge.

The literary works analysed in this book, however, were not all written in colonial or former colonial countries, or to put it another way, in the Third World. Indeed, only two of the seven works examined were, while the remainder were produced in Europe, three of them even in countries that are now members of the European Union. The WReC severely criticises—among others—Susan Bassnett in her "Reflections on Comparative Literature in the Twenty-First Century" for using terms like Europe, the West, and the northern hemisphere as synonymous, as if they were a mystical unity. Against this kind of essentialism, they stress that Europe is divided and culturally multileveled, with plenty of wiped out, extirpated or marginalized languages and cultures. They welcome Lucia Boldrini's critique of a homogeneous view of Europe as the coloniser: most of European countries have no imperial history, or rather only a passive one as she writes in her "Comparative Literature in the Twenty-First Century: A View from Europe and the UK." With this complex view of Europe, it does not seem politically incorrect to find the peripheries or semi-peripheries of the world system in what is geographically called Europe. If irrealist poetics are able to represent not only the effect of uneven and combined development on the colonial peripheries, but also the shock of transition, it is reasonable to find examples of the latter anywhere. The transition from communism to neoliberal capitalism is painful not only in post-communist, post-colonial countries, but also in Eastern- and East-Central-Europe. Post-apartheid neoliberal South-Africa is another example of a difficult transition. Not only is Europe as a whole divided and uneven, so are its most developed countries themselves. Most innovative literature can be produced in the semi-peripheries or peripheries of core countries, a kind of literature that appropriates "marginalized class, ethnic or regional positions" (55). Therefore, according to the WReC, William Faulkner is a typical writer of the periphery, rather than a central writer whose revolutionary technique radiates to the peripheries, as Pasquale Casanova described in *The World Republic of Letters* (127).

If the irrealist poetics of fissures can be a symptom of a political unconscious, the WReC is more interested in cases where authors self-consciously use the fissures in the reality of global capitalism as sources of innovation to transform realist poetics. Theoretically, this kind of innovation can result in two types of literature. One of them would be the

"world-system novel," in which the narrative structure "encapsulates the structure of the world system" (97). The main example could be Bolaño's *2666*. The other type is deeply rooted in a local context, while reflecting its position within the world-system. The book dwells much more on the latter type of literature, and the refined analyses of such novels offer exemplary readings of critical irrealism.

The *Combined and Uneven Development* is perhaps based on too narrow a definition of world-literature, which depends on what is represented in a narrative text. However, for world-literature understood in this sense, the authors elaborate a valuable and undeniably useful toolkit of literary analysis.

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Fabien Pillet. *Vers une esthétique interculturelle de la réception*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2016. Pp. 385. ISBN: 9783825366070.

Issu de la thèse de son auteur, qui aurait sans doute dû être davantage remaniée pour gagner en légèreté et en fluidité, cet ouvrage à l'ambition essentiellement théorique vise à esquisser les grands traits d'une esthétique interculturelle de la réception. Celle-ci est d'emblée